

NEW RELEASE 2024

Karen Knorr *Connoisseurs & Academies*

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Photographic venture into the grand architectural settings of museums, stately homes, and academies

Photographed with an analog camera over 19 years, Karen Knorr's *Connoisseurs & Academies* series immerses us in the elaborate world of museums and stately homes, showcasing objects, paintings, connoisseurship, and academic structures. The use of animals as allegorical motifs, first introduced with a chimpanzee as the *Genius of the Place*, has become a hallmark of Knorr's artistic practice. *Connoisseurs* (1986–1990) explores grand eighteenth-century British mansions, capturing the cultural tourism and ethically dubious acquisition of antiquities that influenced the era's artistic tastes. These artworks, initially private collections, shaped public galleries and defined aesthetic canons. Extending this exploration, *Academies* (1994–2004) investigates European art institutions like Paris' École des Beaux-Arts and Musée d'Orsay, emphasizing how these academies reinforced white Eurocentric patriarchal views through education and public exhibitions. Both series critically and with humour assess the construction of the art market by powerful, wealthy elites, whose influences persist in contemporary culture.

From the text *Afterword: Sightlines* by Jean Wainwright:
Karen Knorr's photographic series Connoisseurs & Academies induces a kaleidoscope of memories. Photographed between 1986 and 2005, her images are now suspended in the pages of this photo book waiting to be animated by the reader. Ruffled by time, we absorb, in the act of turning each leaf, the rhythm of Knorr's long gestated edit, pared down, juggled and rethought. Moving from title to image we can journey on a pathway of our own exploration through multilayers, symbolism, myths and metaphors. We venture into the intricate world of the history of museums and stately homes, of objects, paintings and connoisseurship, and of the structures of academies, with interventions and meticulously

constructed narratives. Knorr has produced a new typology for her Connoisseurs & Academies, akin to Walter Benjamin's comment in 'Unpacking My Library' that the 'most profound enchantment for the collector is the locking of individual items within a magic circle in which they are fixed'. But rather than the 'thrill of acquisition' that Benjamin feels when passing over his books, it is perhaps Knorr's thrill of juxtaposition, each image inviting a train of thought, a reminder of initial intentions, now conflated with contemporary sensibilities.

Karen Knorr (b. 1954) is celebrated for her critical approach and staged visual narratives that address cultural narratives and practices. Using photography to challenge heritage and assumptions within the realms of art and architecture, Knorr's works are featured in the collections of the Tate and Victoria & Albert Museum, London, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris and Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, SFMOMA, San Francisco, National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto, and Museum of Art and Photography (MAP) in Bangalore, among others.

Forthcoming Exhibitions:

Sundaram Tagore Gallery, New York City
25.04.–01.06.2024

Photo London 2024 with Sundaram Tagore Gallery

Paris Photo 2024 with Les Filles du Calvaire, Paris, and Augusta Edwards Fine Art, London

Photographing 80s Britain: A Critical Decade Tate Britain, London
21.11.2024–05.05.2025

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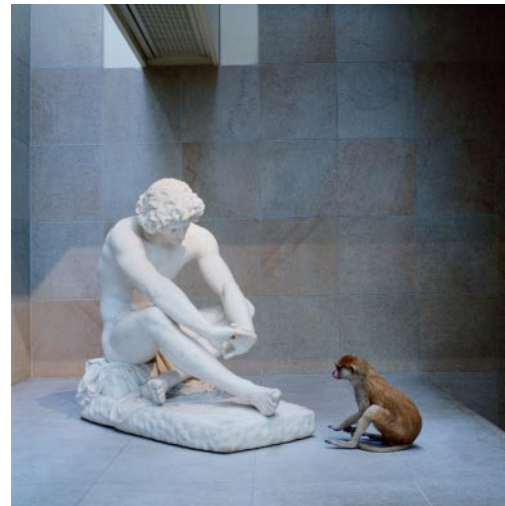
01_ The Analysis of Beauty
Dulwich Picture Gallery, London, England, 1988 © Karen Knorr



02_ Shattering an Old Dream of Symmetry
Osterley Park and House, London, England, 1988 © Karen Knorr



03_ The Artist, The Model, The Art Critic and The Spectator
Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France, 1998 © Karen Knorr



04_ Despair Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France, 1998 © Karen Knorr



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Wallace Collection, London, England, 2000 © Karen Knorr



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10_ Butade's Daughter
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Goldsmiths, London, England, 1997 © Karen Knorr



12_ Movement of the Soul
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